

VIZ



Volume One, Number 1

**RIDE THE WAVE
OF THE FUTURE**

GREY

A FUTURISTIC TALE
OF SURVIVAL...

NAUSICAÄ

THE GREATEST FANTASY OF ALL
IS COMING TRUE!

INTO THE GREY ZONE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
GERARD JONES

NEWS MAGAZINE

Don't be left high and dry! "Ride the Wave '88-'89" and catch all the new books and special events sponsored by Viz Comics.

Viz Comics presents "Ride the Wave '88-'89," a full-scale publicity and promotional campaign starting this summer and extending through spring 1989. "Ride the Wave" was created by Viz to introduce its new line of independent publications. Readers can look forward to deluxe square-bound editions of original graphic novels, published in monthly installments, and bi-weekly mini-series in the familiar comic book format. All Viz publications are original Japanese manga, translated and repackaged for the English-speaking audience.

"Ride the Wave" is a whole lot more than ordinary advertising hype. In addition to press releases, regular news bulletins and full-page advertisements in various magazines and newspapers, beautiful color posters of our hottest titles will be widely distributed. You'll also want to read our monthly *VIZ-IN News Magazine*, which features interviews with famous comics people, news articles, and comments from our readers. The VIZ-IN CLUB has already been organized by enthusiastic fans and boasts more than 2500 members. Be on the

look-out for more Viz Lucky Mail Sweepstakes, too! Prizes will be original comic book character novelty items from Japan.

The first "Ride the Wave" book to debut will be *GREY*, written and drawn by Yoshihisa Tagami. Spring 1989 promises patient fans the long-awaited *LUM*Urusei Yatsura*. And, (assuming contract negotiations continue to go well), eager fans will also be greeted next spring with the Viz Comics publication of that popular and well-known super hero tale, *HOKUTO NO KEN*, "The Fist of the North Star." Other exciting titles are on the way. Keep watching our *VIZ-IN News Magazine* and hang on! The wave of the future has only just begun! □



◀ "Grey",
Book One
Book Two

The 26th century, after the near destruction of humanity . . . enter "Grey," a futuristic tale of survival . . .

A lone figure trudging through a barren desert . . . Two men scanning a screen anxiously, hoping, praying to find some sign of life, somewhere . . . Suddenly, the monitor picks up a faint outline . . .

This is the opening scene of *GREY*—a rather unconventional super hero tale *GREY* is unusual because the main



◀ Original Version of
Urusei Yatsura

VIZ-IN Volume 1, Issue 1
Executive Editor/Seiji Moribuchi
Editor/Abra Greenspan
Design & Layout/Viz Graphics

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character—a tough, cool, unloveable young man known as Grey Death—becomes a super hero, not by choice and not out of any moral or ethical considerations, but merely because his only concern is survival. Survival at any cost! In that strong survival instinct, though, is the ability to save humanity. That is, if Grey chooses to do so...

GREY is an original graphic novel which will be published serially in nine monthly installments. First published in Japan in 1986 by Tokuma Shoten Publishing Co., Ltd., *GREY* was written and drawn by the young manga artist Yoshihisa Tagami. The English adaptation is by Gerard Jones, lettering and touch-up art by David Cody Weiss.

GREY, Book One ships in October. *GREY ILLUSTRATIONS*, the special Japanese album featuring more than fifteen original color illustrations by Tagami will also be available then. (See *CALENDAR* for more specific information.)

In addition, Viz Comics will be handling direct sales of video cassette tapes of the Japanese version of "GREY: Digital Target," the very popular animation film based on the book. □

"Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind"—The greatest fantasy of all is coming true!

The beauty and magic of Hayao Miyazaki's animation film, "Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind" is nearly legendary. Fans everywhere have marveled at its breathtaking majesty and enchanting story. Now, Viz Comics is proud and honored to announce the upcoming publication of the graphic novel version of this wonderful work. The first issue is scheduled to be released in November; just in time to be included on your holiday season wish list. *Nausicaä* will be published in monthly installments, one of the deluxe square-bound editions in the Viz Select Comics line. □

where among other activities, he served as creative consultant to the CBS-TV revival of the classic series *The Twilight Zone*.

Ellison's articles, books and other publications are vast. Among his most recent are two books of essays and the remarkable *Medea: Harlan's World*. Published by Bantam books and Phantasia Press in 1985, this was a major literary project in which Ellison and a stellar crew of writers created an entire imaginary planetary system. In 1987, Nemo Press published a thirty-year retrospective of Ellison's work entitled *The Essential Ellison*. 1988 has also seen the release of two new works. □

More and more Manga! Mini-series added to Viz Comics Publications

Beginning in December 1988, a whole new group of Viz Comics will hit the market. Each of these dynamite biweekly mini-series is scheduled to run for a few months. These mini-series will be of the same high quality production Viz strives for in every publication. Several series will run simultaneously and there will always be a whole lot of fun, drama, action, and excitement, coming direct from Japan. First in line for December is *Justy*, that great cosmic science fiction police tale, complete with espers, space travel and action. Future possibilities include several titles well-known to animation fans as well as many other super hits from Japan. Let us know what you want to read! Send your requests and ideas to: Viz Comics Mini-Series

P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107. □

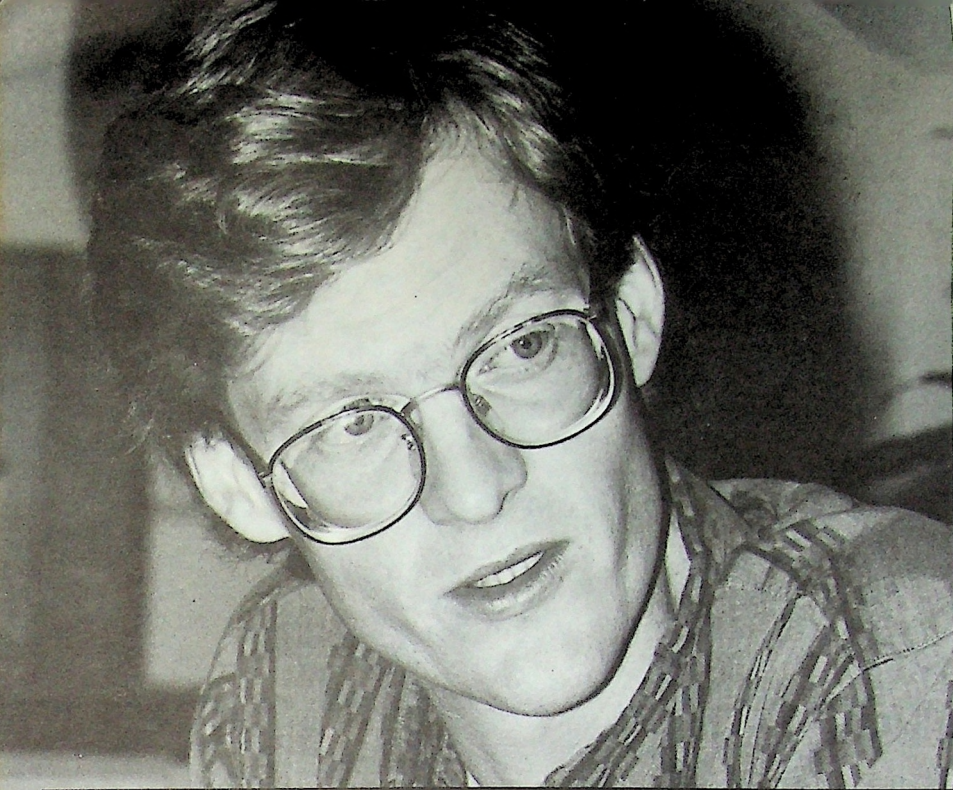
Renowned writer Harlan Ellison contributes foreword to Grey

Book One of *GREY*, the first independent Viz Comics publication will feature a foreword by the well-known writer and critic, Harlan Ellison. After reviewing the original Japanese book and English adaptation by Gerard Jones, Ellison gladly submitted a manuscript. He remarked that he found the theme and content of this Japanese adventure science fiction tale to be very close to his own ideas and inventions. He was also impressed with the fine art and drawing.

In his career spanning thirty years, Ellison has won more awards for his work than any other living fantasist. He has demonstrated originality, skill and creativity in various literary genre. He has also been extraordinarily successful in the highly competitive world of television,

Photo © Michael J. Elderman Photoworks





INTO THE GREY ZONE

AN INTERVIEW WITH GERARD JONES

Gerard Jones has been working with Viz Comics for nearly one year as rewriter for LUM* Urusei Yatsura and GREY. He is well known in the world of humor for his regular contributions to "National Lampoon" and his highly successful comic series, The Trouble With Girls. Although he has grand plans of some day writing that great American novel, for the time being he consented to meet with Viz Comics editor, Abra Greenspan, to answer questions about his ideas on manga and his latest Viz project, GREY.

◆VI—You've been a comics fan since you were very young. Do you recall when you first came in contact with Japanese comics?

★GJ—Dimly. I think it was Fred Schodt's book *Manga Manga!* I looked at it mostly out of curiosity. I was interested in Japanese culture and about to go to Japan. My interest in comics in America made me

by Abra Greenspan

wonder about comics over there. I read about half the book, and looked at some comics in the stands in Japan. That was it until "Amazing Heroes" asked me to review some translated books.

◆——*Did you get a different impression reading the books in English?*

☆——Sure, I could understand them! When I couldn't read them, I was mainly struck by the visual narrative techniques, but I wasn't sure what these characters were doing or what any of the undercurrents were.

◆——*So, you do feel that the words are necessary?*

☆——I'm a writer. They better be necessary! Actually, you can understand the story pretty well from the pictures, which is something you can't usually do with American comics. A few artists like Frank Miller have picked up on this technique and begun employing it. Still, you can't get all of the nuances and any real plot and character development without words.

◆——*I've noticed a number of recent manga translations have extra explanations included in the dialogue or captions. What do you think about this?*

☆——I don't think it is necessary. From what I can tell, Viz doesn't do that. I know I try not to, and I know Jim Hudnall doesn't do it either. Besides, I know that you don't let us. (Laughter.) Anyway, I think the Viz books read just as well as any of the other books. I'm not sure, though, that if you hadn't told me that text is being added that I would have noticed. It certainly doesn't distract, and it's not obtrusive. Still, it isn't necessary.

◆——*I know there are manga fans in the U.S. who would probably read anything from Japan. Do you think our books are accessible to people who aren't familiar with Japanese comics?*

☆——Yeah, I think they are. Like I say, I had only read half of one book about manga and I confess I never even looked at the originals of the books I reviewed. They were all very accessible and I thoroughly enjoyed them.

◆——*What was so enjoyable about them? Was there something distinctive about Japanese comics?*

☆——I suppose novelty was a large part of it. Apart from that, there was a breeziness to them; visual story telling is so quick and unburdened. They read so quickly, sometimes they're gone almost too fast. But, for the most part, I found that very liberating. It was nice to have a comic not get bogged down.

◆——*Let's switch now and talk about our new project GREY. What was your initial impression of GREY?*

☆——Well, I had two. I kind of liked the pictures, but the subject matter looked a bit vapid. (Laughter.) Maybe you'd better cut this comment. (Laughter.) After reading the literal translation though, it began to overcome my preconceptions. Dialogue is very important in this book. There are some fun, oddball future details and science fiction speculation, too. I don't know if these are common in Japanese comics, but they are quite different from what you find here.

◆——*Could you give some examples?*

☆——First the similarities: the post-holocaust dystopia is really common, but it's usually handled with more ur-

ban sleaze. *GREY* has a lot of emphasis on para-military aspects, lots of open spaces, gladiatorial conflicts, things like that. There's a ritualistic quality to the combat, which struck me as being very Japanese. The main character is very interesting, too. American comics often try at this sort of unhappy, haunted protagonist, but it very quickly becomes maudlin. Although they try for that hardboiled, cynical overtone, they never quite get there. *GREY* does it pretty well. Grey's a bitter, haunted protagonist, made cynical by the world he's in. Buried in there is something likeable, but it's not thrown in the reader's face. He manages to be hard without being (pause) socio-pathic or sadistic. His violence is very sensible and practical.

Book Two really won me over. Book One is basically a fight issue. It's a fun way to start, a good way to hook people and for the artist to show off his virtuosity. Tagami is good with the action stuff. In Book Two we meet more people. . . . Book Two has very little violence, but more texture. It's nicely paced and serves as a good interlude. A few wrinkles have been added to the social background and there seem to be some suspicious circumstances concerning the original fight, too. So, it looks like we'll get some kind of twist.

◆——*You're right. Things are not at all what they appear to be!*

☆——That's great. Again, it is something American comics don't do very often. They prefer to keep the conflicts simple, and no surprises. Once they create one apparent reality, as *GREY* does in Book One, they prefer not to deviate. That's a big difference in plotting.

◆——*Why did you decide to take on this rewriting project?*

☆——Well, as I recall, it was pretty close to April 15 when you called. (Laughter.) I was already doing *LUM*, which has lots of small panels, balloons, puns. . . . It's very verbal and very challenging. When I saw this, it looked sooooo easy. And, it's so refreshing. I thought it would be fun to try to do this mean, pared-down kind of writing. Frankly, I've been playing with this style in some of my original comics writing. I thought this would be a good training ground, to see how someone else handles this style.

◆——*How do you select the tone and voice for characters?*

☆——I use the literal translation some. I check with my editor occasionally. The bottom line, though, is that this is English, so I use American rhythms, American slang, American dialects.

◆——*How did you select the tone for Grey Death?*

☆——That came pretty clearly from the visuals. This smart-alecky, slangy, cynical voice seemed to fit the way the guy looked.

◆——*What would you say is the most difficult part of rewriting?*

☆——Humor. There isn't much humor in *GREY*, but there are still some wise-ass remarks. Those are the hardest because the words often have to be completely changed, while keeping the same spirit. The other difficulty is expository dialogue. Often information has to be con-

Grey's a bitter, haunted protagonist, made cynical by the world he's in.

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This smart-alecky, slangy, cynical voice seemed to fit the way the guy looked.

veyed through dialogue. I'm assuming it reads naturally in Japanese, but the literal translation comes out clunky. Usually I write those passages six or seven times until I finally get one that works.

◆——What is the most fun you have when you rewrite?

☆——Sound effects! I get to say all of these funny sounds out loud to myself. A lot of the time, I'll use standard American FX. Others I invent. I try out different noises, which makes it hard to write on the days when my wife is at home. (Laughter.) It's a game. I don't have to think about content or character; just come up with neat sounds and try to figure out what letters represent them.

◆——What kind of appeal do you think GREY has and who do you think will read it?

☆——Frankly, I think GREY requires a taste or a fantasy life that is somewhat in tune with American comics. I don't think you really need to be comic book trained—it is very understandable and reads very clearly with no

knowledge of comic books, but it does appeal to a comic book taste. Someone who doesn't read comics regularly probably wouldn't be attracted to it. Apart from the manga fanatics, I think anyone who is reading science fiction adventures will like it—people who read works like STRIKEFORCE, MORITURI, maybe even some of the crime suspense books like PUNISHER. People who like super hero teams, too.

◆——Have you any final comments you'd like to say about GREY or the whole project?

☆——Just to repeat that my first impression of GREY was less positive than now. Since the second book, I'm totally hooked. I'm having a lot of fun with it. GREY is not as puerile as most American action comics and it manages to keep a fairly sober and mature tone. There are exceptions where a sort of adolescent sensibility creeps in, but I just grin and bear it. All in all, it's a great project and I do like working on it. □

what you are thinking about what kinds of articles you'd like to see, your ideas about animation or manga or comics in general. After all, VIZ-IN is a magazine for you and I hope all our fans will enjoy reading it. You know, producing a monthly magazine full of interesting news and fascinating articles is no easy job. Trying to read about in this column two or three months from now, contacting all those famous (and some soon-to-be famous) folks for interviews, tracking the manga news in Japan, keeping up with comics news here in the States, and on and on—it's practically makes you pant just reading about it, doesn't it? Well, it's my job, as they say.

Still, you can help a poor editor out! And get yourself a bit of hard print space and internal exposure, while you're at it. Nearly every issue of VIZ-IN includes column space allotted to letters, comments and articles from our fans and retailers. Start writing! I'm looking forward to a veritable deluge of mail.

VIZ-IN News Magazine will be published monthly and ship on the third Tuesday of every month. Look for it in your local retail shop, or become an exclusive member of the VIZ-IN CLUB and receive a copy mailed directly to you.

Meanwhile, here's to a long and fruitful friendship! Send your letters and contributions to:

VIZ-IN MAIL
Viz Comics
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

THE EDITOR

From

CALENDAR

GREY, Book One

Story and Art by Yoshihisa Tagami
Translated and Adapted by
Satoru Fujii and Gerard Jones
Lettering and Touch-Up by
David Cody Weiss
Foreword by Harlan Ellison

Black and White, 72 pages
Deluxe Square-bound
U.S. \$2.95/CAN \$4.00
A Viz Select Comic
One of Nine Monthly Installments

A lone figure trudges through a barren desert. He carries a gun slung over his shoulder, a battered helmet, ornamented with the word "Lips." The men scanning the monitor seek anxiously for any other survivor. There is no one, only this solitary young man, only Number TFA-404953-C...

There is something hard and fierce about this young man, some kind of anger, toughness and resolve that he exudes. He is Grey—Grey Death—Class C Trooper.

The setting is a vague future world, sometime in the 26th century and humanity has only just begun to recover from almost total annihilation. Since battle is the only way up and out of the squalor and horror, it becomes a way of life. For Grey Death, though, the promise of a luxurious future is not the main goal of his struggle. As with everything, he's got his own reasons for what he does. Still, by virtue of his extreme independence and individuality, Grey unwittingly brings a promise of salvation and of freedom into this bleak, barren world.



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**Calling All Fans!
Calling All Fans!
Don't be the last
on your block to
join the Viz-In Club!**

GREY ILLUSTRATIONS

Published by Tokuma Shoten
Publishing Co., Ltd.
U.S. \$12.95/CAN \$17.50
74 pages, 8 5/16" x 11 11/16"

This Japanese edition of a special album featuring over fifteen original color illustrations by Yoshihisa Tagami is truly beautiful. Based on the characters and scenes in GREY, it includes several unique pin-ups reproduced only in this album! A fold-out mini-poster highlights the inside front cover; the latter pages are packed with exclusive photographs of Tagami at work and at play. This one is a must for all Tagami and GREY fans!

Special Note to Readers:
Look for *Grey Illustrations* at your local comics retail shop. If unavailable, you can order directly from Viz Comics. Order early, only a limited number available. Just send a money order for \$15.45 (\$2.50 for postage and handling) to:

Grey Illustrations
Viz Comics
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

Allow four to six weeks for delivery.



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More than 2500 fans throughout the world have already become members of the VIZ-IN CLUB! You don't want to miss this great opportunity.

Membership privileges include:

- exclusive membership card
- subscription to VIZ-IN News Magazine (This is the fastest and surest way to get information about all new and continuing Viz Comics titles and events.)
- special novelty goods for purchase by members only

VIZ-IN News Magazine #4

8 pages,
\$4.00 per bundle of 100 copies.

Keep up to date! Don't be left out! VIZ-IN News Magazine features exclusive interviews with interesting and well-known personalities in the comics industry. Read about who they are and what they really think. There's always plenty of hot news about new Viz publications, continuing series, events of interest in the world of Japanese manga, letters and articles from our international fans and retailers, too. Fans, VIZ-IN News magazine is available at local retail shops or through individual membership in the VIZ-IN CLUB. Start collecting now. You won't want to miss a single issue of VIZ-IN News Magazine!

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- discounts on special offer items (posters, stickers, etc.)
- exclusive member-only presents and prizes at designated comic conventions (Just show your card at the Viz Comics booth.)
- exclusive member-only presents and prizes awarded periodically throughout the year
- priority mailing on subscriptions
- and many more fantastic offers for members only

GREY: DIGITAL TARGET

\$119.95, retail price, 80 minutes
Japanese version only,
specify VHS or Beta.
Allow four to six weeks for delivery.

This is the video of the highly successful theater version of the comic. Like the manga, GREY: DIGITAL TARGET is the story of the tough young Trooper Grey as he battles to earn credits and move from the low social caste of "People" to the luxury and safety of "Citizenship." The animated version follows the comic through the middle of volume two. From that point, director Tetsu Dezaki, takes the story into new dimensions. Although Grey is not quite as tough and hard-boiled in the video, the story moves quickly with lots of action. A different ending from the book makes this an exciting addition to Grey fans' libraries.

Produced by Seiji Sakamoto and Hiroshi Kato under the guidance of Yoshihisa Tagami, GREY: DIGITAL TARGET is available only from Viz Comics.

Send money order for \$124.95 (\$119.95 plus \$5.00 postage and handling) to:



Grey: Digital Target
Viz Comics
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco,
CA 94107

Join before December 21, 1988 and you'll get a whole year membership absolutely free of charge!

To join, just fill out the attached form and send it with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

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Viz Comics
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San Francisco, CA 94107

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Street Address: _____

City and State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Favorite titles: _____

**END
PAGE
GALLERY**



NAUSICAÄ OF THE VALLEY OF WIND BY HAYAO MIYAZAKI



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'88-'89

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